

## Finding Aid to the Jules and Lois Herman Photograph Collection

### Herman, Jules (1912-2005) and Lois

Jules and Lois Herman Photograph Collection, 1930s-1960s

39 photographic prints.

Collection number: Welk Photo 004

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### OVERVIEW

**Links:** Finding aid to the [Jules and Lois Herman Papers](#) (Welk Mss 6)

**Access:** The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Institute.

**Provenance:** Donated by Jules and Lois Herman, 1994-1995 (Acc. 94-28, 94-38, 95-13).

**Property rights:** The Institute for Regional Studies owns the property rights to this collection.

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**Citation:** Institute for Regional Studies, NDSU (item number)

### BIOGRAPHY

Jules Herman was born March 6, 1912 at rural DeLamere, N.D., the son of Walter and Julia (Johnson) Herman where he grew up on a farm and started playing trumpet at an early age. He attended Moorhead State Teachers College (now Minnesota State University Moorhead) where he graduated in 1935. He then taught music at the Gardner, N.D. school for eight months but quit when Lawrence Welk unexpectedly asked him to join his orchestra which at that time was playing regularly on WNAX radio station in Yankton, S.D. Jules had auditioned for Welk's band earlier in Sioux Falls, S.D.

Alice Best, a native of Pittsburg, Penn. began singing on KDKA radio station in Pittsburg shortly after graduating from high school. There she was one of the staff singers on a program called The Strollers. While the Welk orchestra was performing at the William Penn Hotel in Pittsburg, Penn. in 1938 the names Champagne Music and Champagne Lady were created. It was also decided to add a female vocalist to his orchestra. Welk had heard about Lois Best. One evening he asked Jules to join him to see her perform in person when performing with the Benny Burton orchestra. Welk hired Lois as his first female singer, becoming his first Champagne Lady. Before the year was out Lois and Jules Herman were married.

When the Welk orchestra moved to California in 1940 Jules and Lois Herman left the Welk organization to stay in Chicago and raise their family. When World War II began Herman attempted to join the military as an officer but was not accepted. He spent the war years working at a Chicago area defense plant by day and at night played trumpet for the Griff Williams Society Band at the Empire Room of the Palmer House. He later joined Wayne King, the waltz king, before forming his own band in the late 1940s. In 1952 Jules Herman accepted an invitation to head the house orchestra at the Prom Room in St. Paul, Minn. For the next thirty-five years Jules Herman orchestra played at the Prom. The eleven-piece group also included Lois on the organ. The band also played in 1970 and 1971 for six weeks each at the Roseland Dance City in New York City. Herman also led the Minnesota Vikings football band for eight years, ending in 1982. Herman's band's last engagement was in 1996 at the University of Minnesota.

Jules and Lois raised son Joel and three daughters, Bonnie, Gloria and Debra. They spent their retirement years in St. Paul, Minn. Jules died July 22, 2005 at Mendota Heights, Minnesota.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The **Jules and Lois Herman Photograph Collection** provides a glimpse into their musical careers, particularly that of Jules Herman. The images, spanning from the 1930s to the 1960s, include individual and couple portraits, many of the bands in which Jules performed including his own band in St. Paul, Minn., and also a variety of images from the scrapbook in his papers. The collection has been organized into three series: Jules and Lois Herman, Bands and orchestras, and Topical.

The **Jules and Lois Herman Series** includes ten images including individual portraits of each of them. There is one of Jules with Louis Armstrong, each holding a trumpet. The couples file includes an image of Jules and Lois as guests of Lawrence Welk and his orchestra. Jules is playing the trumpet while Lois appears to be singing.

The **Bands and Orchestras Series** consists primarily of formal group shots of bands with which Jules Herman was associated. Among them is a large group of musicians in the Crystal Ballroom in Fargo, N.D. and the Red Jackets band of Fargo, also taken at the Crystal Ballroom. The other groups represented include Johnnie 'Scat' Davis Orchestra, Jules Herman Band, Wayne King Orchestra, Griff Williams Orchestra, and three very nice photographs of the early Lawrence Welk Orchestra. On most if not all

Herman has marked where he is located on each print. Most of them also have reasonably good identification on the reverse, sometimes written identification of each person.

The **Topical Series** includes a single portrait of Vic Schroeder taken in 1969. He is identified as Lawrence Welk's partner and agent in Yankton, S.D. and Omaha, Neb. and also the person who influenced Jules to organize his own band in 1950. The Scrapbook files contains photocopies of the original photographs and several postcards found in a scrapbook documenting Jules and Lois's career that is part of their papers. All of them have identification and include Jules Herman with the Lennon Sisters, his own band, daughter Bonnie with the Lawrence Welk orchestra at the Prom in St. Paul, The Fargo-Moorhead Amphion Male Chorus (1934), snapshots with Welk in Chicago, Jules performing with Wayne King on television show, three musicians with Welk including Herman, billboard sign for Griff Williams orchestra with Jules Herman's name featured, postcards of the Empire Room of the Palmer House Hotel in Chicago, and the male members of the Lawrence Welk orchestra where Jules was subbing (1966).

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